

38/29/

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FRP:

STATE

ACTION: NONE INFO: ODPB-8, RF, FILE, CEX-3, CR/U, D/FBIS-2,
EPB/EG-2, EUR-3, IAD/CAS-3, IAD/IC, INT/PL, NE-4, NIO/NE, NIO/SS, NIO/ST,
NIO/USSR, NIO/WE, OCO/USSR, OCO/WE, OGCR-2, ORPA/ARM-3, ORPA/II-2,
ORPA/USSR-4, ORPA/WEN-2, RES/ARD, SE-6, (49/N)

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RR RUEAII
ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH
TRR RUENMO RUDKFMG RUENTV RUENOT RUFHLE RUDKDA
DE RUENC #6676 2301320
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R 181130Z AUG 79
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO RUENMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0000
RUDKFMG/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 0000
RUENTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0000
INFO RUENOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0000
RUFHLE/AMCONSUL Leningrad 0000
RUDKDA/AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST 0000
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 216676

E.O. 12065 N/A

TAGS:PINT,SHUM, UR, US, SW

SUBJECT:PRESS PLAY ABOUT NEW REPORT ON WALLEMBERG CASE

REF: STOCKHOLM 3281 (NOTAL)

1. AUGUST 11 ISSUE OF WASHINGTON POST CARRIED AN ARTICLE,
"NWII MYSTERY. SWEDEN INVESTIGATES LETTER AS CLUE TO
MISSING DIPLOMAT", REPORTING THAT NEW INFORMATION HAS COME
TO LIGHT RECENTLY ON THE WALLEMBERG CASE. ARTICLE WAS
WRITTEN BY JOHN BIERMAN OF THE BOSTON GLOBE AND DATED
TEL AVIV.

2. TEXT OF ARTICLE FOLLOWS:

THE SWEDISH FOREIGN MINISTRY IS INVESTIGATING A LETTER
CONTAINING NEW INDICATIONS THAT RAUL WALLEMBERG, A SWEDISH

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DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHOD EXEMPTION 3828
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2006

FOR COORDINATION WITH

State

*only one ey need
Rpts
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done
file - Wallenberg*

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DIPLOMAT WHO SAVED THOUSANDS OF JEWISH LIVES DURING WORLD WAR II, MAY STILL BE ALIVE IN THE SOVIET PRISON SYSTEM.

WALLENBERG, A CENTER OF DIPLOMATIC CONTROVERSY FOR YEARS, DIED IN PRISON IN 1947, ACCORDING TO SOVIET OFFICIALS.

SINCE THEN, HOWEVER, SEVERAL PERSONS RELEASED FROM VARIOUS SOVIET PRISONS HAVE TOLD OF SEEING WALLENBERG OR HEARING

SECOND-HAND ACCOUNTS OF HIS PRESENCE.

THE LETTER SUGGESTS THAT HE MAY BE ALIVE WAS PURPORTEDLY SMUGGLED OUT OF THE SOVIET UNION TO A WOMAN WHO LIVES HERE.

SOVIET AFFAIRS EXPERTS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY IN STOCKHOLM ARE CHECKING OUT THE LETTER TO DETERMINE ITS AUTHENTICITY.

THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN BY EUGENIA KAPLAN IN MOSCOW TO HER DAUGHTER, ANNA BILDER, IN ISRAEL. IT GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF HOW JAN KAPLAN, THE HUSBAND OF EUGENIA KAPLAN, MET "THIS SWISS OR SWEDEN WALLENBERG" IN THE BUTYRKA PRISON INFIRMARY IN 1975.

KAPLAN HAD BEEN JAILED IN 1975 ON CURRENCY CHARGES. WHEN HE WAS RELEASED 18 MONTHS LATER FOR HEALTH REASONS, HE TELEPHONED BILDER IN ISRAEL TO TELL HER OF HIS RELEASE. IN THE CONVERSATION, ACCORDING TO HIS DAUGHTER, HE MENTIONED THAT WHILE IN THE PRISON INFIRMARY HE HAD "MET A SWEDEN WHO'D BEEN IN DIFFERENT PRISONS FOR 30 YEARS AND HE WAS IN PRETTY GOOD CONDITION".

THE INFORMATION EVENTUALLY WAS GIVEN TO SWEDISH OFFICIALS WHO ASKED THE SOVIETS FOR AN EXPLANATION. LAST JANUARY, THE SOVIETS TOLD SWEDEN THEY HAD NO FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT WALLENBERG.

IN EARLY JULY, BILDER RECEIVED A LETTER PURPORTEDLY FROM HER MOTHER CONTAINING MORE INFORMATION. THE LETTER, DATED JUNE 14, HAD BEEN BROUGHT FROM MOSCOW BY A NEWLY ARRIVED SOVIET EMIGRANT.

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"I WRITE THIS LETTER BUT I AM NOT SURE IT WILL REACH YOU AND THAT THE SAME THING WILL NOT HAPPEN AS WITH FATHER'S LETTER, BECAUSE OF WHICH HE HAS ALREADY SPENT A YEAR-AND-A-HALF IN PRISON AGAIN", THE MOTHER'S LETTER SAID.

"I LOST ALL HOPE AFTER I WAS CALLED TO LUBIANKA PRISON AND LEARNED THAT ALL THIS TRAGEDY OCCURRED BECAUSE OF THE LETTER ABOUT THIS SWISS OR SWEDEN WALLEMBERG WHOM HE MET IN THE PRISON INFIRMARY. . . FATHER WROTE A LONG LETTER ABOUT THIS WALLEMBERG AND FOR A LONG TIME HE CARRIED IT AROUND WITH HIM LOOKING FOR A CHANCE TO SEND IT TO YOU THROUGH A FOREIGN TOURIST. . .

"ONE SATURDAY, FATHER CAME BACK IN A VERY GOOD MOOD AND TOLD ME THAT AT LONG LAST HE HAD SUCCEEDED IN GIVING THE LETTER TO A YOUNG FOREIGN TOURIST WHO PROMISED TO SEND THE LETTER FROM VIENNA OR GERMANY, I DON'T REMEMBER WHICH."

A FEW DAYS LATER, ON FEBRUARY 3, 1978, THE LETTER SAID, KAPLAN WAS ARRESTED AGAIN. A SOVIET COLONEL AT THE PRISON TOLD MRS. KAPLAN, ACCORDING TO THE LETTER, THAT HER HUSBAND HAD BEEN ARRESTED BECAUSE, AFTER BEING FREED, HE HAD "UNGRATEFULLY DECIDED TO SEND OUT ILLEGALLY THROUGH A FOREIGNER AN ANTI-SOVIET SPY LETTER TO ISRAEL".

BILDER SAYS SHE IS CONVINCED THAT THE LETTER IS GENUINE. IT IS HER MOTHER'S HANDWRITING, SHE SAYS, AND THE MODE OF EXPRESSION IS HER MOTHER'S.

WALLEMBERG'S SURVIVING FAMILY--A HALF-BROTHER, PROF. GUY VAN DARDEL, AND A HALF-SISTER, NINA LASERGREN--HAVE BEEN FORMING COMMITTEES IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES IN RECENT MONTHS TO PRESS THE SOVIETS TO MAKE A FULLER DISCLOSURE OF WALLEMBERG'S FATE.

WALLEMBERG, WHO IF ALIVE WOULD BE 65, WAS SENT TO THE SWEDISH LEGATION IN BUDAPEST LATE IN WORLD WAR II TO SAVE JEWS. HE ISSUED THOUSANDS OF SPECIAL SWEDISH PASSPORTS TO HUNGARIAN JEWS, ENABLING THEM TO ESCAPE HITLER'S DEATH CAMPS.

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HE WAS LAST SEEN OUTSIDE THE SOVIET UNION WHEN, SHORTLY AFTER RUSSIAN TROOPS MOVED INTO BUDAPEST, HE WAS TAKEN TO A MEETING WITH MARSHAL RODION MALINOVSKY, COMMANDER OF THE SOVIET FORCES. END TEXT.

3. FOR STOCKHOLM. PLEASE QUERY MFA AT APPROPRIATE LEVEL CONCERNING KAPLAN LETTER AND ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN ANY ADDITIONAL DETAILS CONCERNING WALLEMBERG THAT IT CONTAINS AS WELL AS SWEDISH ASSESSMENT OF LETTER'S VERACITY. RE PARA (4) REFTEL, EMBASSY MAY CONFIRM THAT APPROACH TO SOVIETS WAS MADE BY DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL IN WASHINGTON ON JULY 21.

4. FOR TEL AVIV. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION ON THIS MATTER YOU CAN OBTAIN FROM ISRAELI SOURCES. FYI: NEW ISRAELI MINISTER-COUNSELOR YANAI WHO HAS JUST ARRIVED FROM TEL AVIV OPINED TO BARRY (EUR) THAT HE HAD BEEN PERSUADED THAT THERE WAS NO REPEAT NO VALID EVIDENCE INDICATING THAT WALLEMBERG MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE. HE SAID HE HAD SPOKEN TO MRS. BILDER AND HAD BEEN PERSUADED THAT THERE IS NOTHING IN CORRESPONDENCE WITH KAPLAN WORTH PURSUING. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT LETTER REFERRED TO IN PRESS IS A NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE CASE BUT RATHER A REF-

ERENCE TO A PREVIOUS LETTER WHICH DID NOT IDENTIFY WALLEMBERG BY NAME AS THE PERSON WHO WAS SEEN IN SOVIET PRISON. END FYI.

5. FOR STOCKHOLM: ACCORDING TO YANAI, ISRAELI INFORMATION IS THAT SOVIETS TURNED OVER DOCUMENTS ON WALLEMBERG'S IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH TO SWEDES. YANAI SAID THAT DETAILED RECORDS HAD BEEN KEPT IN 1945-47 IN LYUBLYANKA PRISON AND IMPLIED THAT DOCUMENTS MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXCERPTS FROM THESE RECORDS. PLEASE INQUIRE OF MFA AS TO WHETHER SUCH DOCUMENTS WERE INDEED PROVIDED. CHRISTOPHER

END OF MESSAGE

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